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## What will the Future Home and Farm Orchard be?

Many of the old farm orchards are passing and as yet but few new ones have been planted to take their places. In the best developed commercial fruit sections the farm home orchard may not be especially important, but in all other sections it is of vital importance. The argument that farmers will buy plenty of fruit does not seem to be sound, they don't do it, especially in non-commercial sections. Any size of orchard on the farm is a burden when it comes to spraying and the larger the orchard the more burdensome it becomes, unless the owner is fortunate enough to be a member of a spray ring.

The purpose of these remarks is to bring out discussion and constructive criticism. Here is a plan - what do you think of it? Let every extension fruit man air his views. Since the great bugbear of the home orchard is spraying, let us simplify it by using a small mechanical dusting machine, this has been done with success. Since small apple trees are easier handled than tall ones, let us use those dwarfed by being propagated on doucin stock. These grow 12 to 15 feet high and may be set from 14 to 20 feet apart each way and a dozen or fifteen will supply the average sized family. They do not begin producing fruit earlier than standard trees, but they are sprayed and handled a whole lot easier. Dwarf pears may be used also and other kinds of trees like peaches, plums and cherries may be headed low and kept pruned back so they are of medium size. Here is the big idea - a farmer can dust spray his whole home orchard alone in a half hour or less with a good mechanical hand duster and control diseases and insects very satisfactorily - not perfectly of course (few commercial men do that), but he will get a lot of good fruit. An important point in this plan is to have just enough fruit trees for the family, a real home orchard. The farmer is then entirely independent, he can spray his trees in a few minutes before breakfast or after supper while the dew is on. The suburbanite is coming to this plan and it is really being done very satisfactorily.

What do you fruit extension men think of it for the farmer who cannot join a spray ring?

In instances where the home orchard is in poor condition and on its last legs, why not try to induce the owner to plant a new dwarf orchard and prune and spray the old trees just enough to keep them producing until the dwarf orchard is in bearing.

A few of the dwarf orchards as demonstrations will be worth while - who will start them?

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## Small Fruits and the Perennial Garden.

The above article written by Prof. Close touches a vital point in the why or why-not of having home farm orchards. Many farmers reason that it takes too long to bring an orchard to bearing but time costs nothing and the main thing is to make a start. Small fruits and the perennial



vegetables come into production the second or third year and there is no reasonable excuse for growing the varieties adapted to the locality in sufficient quantity to supply the family. We have tried in Farmers' Bulletin No. 1242 to furnish a guide for extension workers and others in promoting the planting and culture of small fruits and perennial vegetables. We need just such a publication covering the work of taking care of a home orchard. Problems such as spraying, dusting and general control measures are becoming simplified, and we will appreciate a frank discussion of this important topic of providing a home fruit and perennial vegetable supply.

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#### Fruit Conditions.

Since the May 1 number of the "Extension Horticulturist" was sent out we have heard from a number of the workers relative to fruit prospects in their respective states. Prof. R. B. Cruickshank of Ohio writes as follows:

"The cold weather of May 8 did little damage in Ohio. The southern part of the State has prospects for an excellent crop of late apples and particularly Rome Beauty. Early apples and Grimes Golden will show practically nothing due to lack of fruit buds and low temperature combined. There will be no peaches, cherries or plums in that part of the State. Through the remainder of the State and particularly in northern Ohio all fruits have shown a heavy bloom and the prospects are for a good crop of everything. Indications are for a heavy drop, but unless it is unusually severe should not hurt the prospects except on thinly set trees."

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Prof. C. L. Burkholder of Indiana writes:

"From present reports there seems to be an excellent prospect for apples in this State. Peaches were not injured at all by the cold weather of the past few weeks. Our peach section is mainly south of Indianapolis and had gone through the blooming season when this weather came on. I do not feel that the peach crop will be as heavy as last year due to the heavy crop in 1922, and the rather light pruning and failure to thin enough last season. Probably the trees will carry all they should considering their present condition and vigor. Young peach orchards just coming into bearing have an excellent crop prospect.

I spent last week in northern Indiana and also several days in northern Ohio. The sweet cherry crop in these sections was very good as they had gone through the blooming season before the cold snap. Sour cherries appeared to be setting a very light crop in spite of a heavy bloom. Evidently having been hurt by the rain and cold during the blooming season."

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Prof. H. A. Cardinell of Michigan advises:

"It is too early to estimate what may be the total damage from the heavy snow that fell over the Lower Peninsula of Michigan on the week





of May 7. The Upper Peninsula received no snow and no damage, as the apples up there were in the pre-blossom stage, only beginning to push out the tips. On the low ground in the southern part of the State there was some damage to Early Richmond cherries but Montmorency was scarcely injured. The northern part of the Lower Peninsula was scarcely touched because the season is about 10 days later than last year.

All fruits are showing a heavy set of blossom buds and there will be nearly as heavy bloom as last year. Our worry is that apple scab and cherry leaf spot which caused the leaves to fall in July 1922, will produce a heavy bloom but a poor set of fruit. In other words, it is the nutritive condition of the trees that is certain to give us our main crop reduction rather than any frost damage to date.

The universal use of nitrogen fertilizers this spring may offset some of last season's low vigor."

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Prof. Brock's report from Illinois follows:

"While yet too early to give a definite report on the fruit prospects in Illinois, because the June drop will not have taken place in central Illinois before the last of the week, the following report may be of interest inasmuch as we were unable to report on the condition of our crop as of the last of April:

"The bloom on apple trees was uniformly heavy over the whole state; in fact the only variety which I have observed yet which is shy in some localities is York. In one case where the trees bore heavily last year there is not enough of a crop to spray for. Unlike a great many seasons orchard after orchard which bore heavily last season came back with a full crop this time, and while it is a little early to determine the set we can state that the set should be excellent. We have not had a more favorable blooming period in the past ten years. Nearly all of our apple producing sections experienced warm sun shining weather during the blooming period which should make for a good set. As far north as the set can be determined, which takes in practically the southern one-third of the State, the reports are that fruit has set well. We have had altogether too much rain, and we will, therefore, have more than the average amount of scab.

"Our commercial crop, which consists almost entirely of Elberta, will not exceed 1,000 cars and this figure may be as low as 700 or 30% of last year's crop. The quality should be extra - ordinarily good, because the trees are not too full, which should and will mean extra good size fruit.

"The pear crop is so light and spotted that it is very difficult to estimate. The 1922 crop was light, probably 40% of a normal crop. This year's crop is probably 85% of that of last year. The heaviest producing sections in Marion and Union counties report no orchards full and many blanks with a few reporting a half-crop."





Mr. A. P. Boles, Extension Specialist of Missouri writes under date of May 14, as follows:

"I have been all over the State of Missouri since the early spring and find that with very few exceptions, the orchards of this section have the heaviest bloom that they have had in a number of years. The pollenization weather good and I look for a good set of fruit and a correspondingly good crop. As to the percentage, I do not think that it would be possible to make any estimate as yet due to the fact that the pollenization weather in some parts of the State was better than in others. On the whole, however, our pollenization weather was very good throughout the State.

The commercial peach crop of the State of Missouri is practically destroyed. There will be some few sections where the local crop will be quite good and in most sections of the State there are enough peaches for home use or local use. There has been very little damage to the strawberry crop from frosts and the strawberry crop will be very good, although the yield will not be as high as in other years, due to the dry weather last summer which cut down the number of plants in the field."

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A trip through eastern Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey made by Mr. Beattie during the past 10 days indicates splendid prospects for practically all kinds of fruit throughout the section visited.

Certain varieties of apples bear a light crop, also in peach orchards that were not injured by frost last year and have bore a heavy crop the setting of fruit is rather light this year. Throughout New Jersey the peaches are heavily loaded and prospects good. Everywhere in this section the sprayers were running full time, the orchards are for the most part in good cultural condition and it looks like a banner year for the fruit men of the three states visited. Strawberries were moving from southern Maryland and just beginning to ripen at the Seabrook Farms which are located at Bridgeton, New Jersey. By the way if any of the readers of the "Extension Horticulturist" have an opportunity to go visiting this summer and should choose any of the eastern seaside resorts as a place to spend their vacation they should make a side trip to Bridgeton and visit the Seabrook Farms. These farms are perhaps the biggest and most complete vegetable growing enterprise in the country and include so many departments and lines of production that they are well worth a visit. For example, there are about 300 acres under overhead irrigation; the cold storage rooms have a capacity for several hundred cars of produce; There is a large canning factory which takes care of all surplus products of the farm; the rapidly developing orchard enterprise includes over 20,000 trees which are coming into bearing. About 400 acres of strawberries are grown in the spaces between the young trees and so on. The place is conducted on a very large scale and with a care and perfection seldom found on a smaller place. The vegetable and fruit production on the Seabrook Farms has been placed on the factory or standardized basis and with irrigation for the more difficult crops, the production of vegetables becomes almost a matter of perfect control.

The labor problem on truck farms of the east is still extremely difficult and vegetable growers are experiencing considerable difficulty



not only in securing floating labor, such as berry pickers, but in providing permanent labor. Many growers are being compelled to abandon the production of certain crops that require an excess of labor and are confining their attention to those crops that can be handled with a minimum of man hours.

Among the truck farms visited by Mr. Beattie on his trip was that of the Starkey Produce Company located along the river south of Morrisville, Pennsylvania. This farm is managed by Mr. Earl King, a graduate of Columbia University, New York, who has pitted his keen observation and business experience against the odds of climate, soil and labor in the conduct of this farm. Mr. King says that he has found the fundamental principle of the whole proposition in the careful management of labor and the planting of crops that can be handled economically. The four main crops grown on this farm are asparagus, rhubarb, spinach and celery. On the day of the visit a 40-acre field of spinach was being planted with an ordinary wheat drill. On the same day three large truck loads of spinach were sent forward to the New York market. One of these truck loads which was just leaving the packing room consisting of 483 bushels of washed spinach or almost a carload. The location of the farm is such that the products can be hauled by truck within 5 or 6 hours to the best markets in the eastern United States. The management of the farm is such as to provide the equalization of labor. Back of it all there was observed a spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding between Mr. King and his labor. A strict but simple cost accounting gives Mr. King a definite basis upon which to plan. The soil is a river bottom loam on which large quantities of manure is being used, but no irrigation. This farm struck the writer as being very nearly ideal from the standpoint of a practical truck farm enterprise.

One important observation made by Mr. Beattie on his recent trip was the universal and extensive damage being wrought by the asparagus beetle. There is need for the broadcasting of information relative to the best methods of controlling this beetle, especially during the summer months after the cutting season for asparagus is over. Many of the growers who were visited admitted that they did not poison the beetles and that it appeared in great numbers in their fields during the summer. In states where asparagus is being grown on a large scale, it would seem extremely desirable that the horticultural specialists cooperate closely with the entomologists in the spread of information relative to combating this beetle.

Another observation on the trip was the extent to which nicotine dust is being used for combating striped cucumber beetle on all vine crops, also for controlling aphids on peas, lettuce and other crops that are especially subject to the work of the various species of aphids. What Prof. Close has said about the simplicity and ease with which the dust can be applied is only partially true with the vegetables, because of the large acreages of the vegetables being grown. It is observed also that many of the hand-dusters on the market are man-killers and extremely ineffective in the proper distribution of the dust. The system of dusting for control of insects, however, is becoming more and more general and under many conditions more practical than spraying.

At some time in the future we will be glad to give the experience of the men in the states in this matter of dusting.

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C. P. Close, Extension Pomologist.

